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Yahoo! News Thu, Aug 07, 2003

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## Politics

### House Approves Three-Year Ban on Myanmar Imports

Tue Jul 15, 4:36 PM ET

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WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The U.S. House of Representatives voted 418-2 on Tuesday to ban imports from Myanmar, where pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi has been held by the government since May 30.

[Reuters](#) [Slideshow: Myanmar](#)

Rep. Tom Lantos, a California Democrat who help craft the sanctions bill, said the import ban would hit Myanmar's leaders "where it hurts -- in their checking accounts."

"United States imports of Burmese products have been bankrolling Burma's brutal dictatorship. Burma's major exporters are either owned by the ruling thugs, or are intricately tied to the government," he said.

Last month, the Senate voted 97-1 to ban imports from Myanmar, subject to annual congressional renewal, until the country has a democratically elected government in place. U.S. officials still refer to Myanmar by its former name, Burma.

The House bill would limit the import ban to three years to address U.S. business community concerns about the difficulty of lifting sanctions once they have been imposed.

Like the Senate bill, it also freezes the assets of the Myanmar regime and its leadership in the United States, reiterates existing U.S. policy to oppose lending to Myanmar in international financial institutions, and strengthens the current visa ban on former and present leaders of the Myanmar government or its political arm.

The Senate could approve the new House version in coming days and send a final bill to President Bush ([news](#) - [web sites](#)), who is expected to sign it, congressional aides said.

The United States imported \$356 million worth of textiles, clothing,

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footwear and other goods from Myanmar in 2002.

The Myanmar government arrested Suu Kyi on May 30 following a clash between her supporters and pro-government groups outside Yangon, the country's capital. She has spent more than half of the last 14 years in detention in her home in Yangon.

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